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THE

# Commonweal

*President Eisenhower's Commission*

## *The Nation's Goals*

**by Stephen R. Graubard**

*Inside Soviet Central Asia*

## *To the Tomb of Tamerlane*

**by James Kritzeck**

*THE DART* . . . . . *by David Galler*
*A WORLD WITHOUT GOD* . . . . . *by James Finn*
*THROUGH AFRICA WITH WAUGH* . . . . . *by Max Cosman*
*JEAN KERR'S HUMOR* . . . . . *by Jean Holzhauer*
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THE
# Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

## week by week

### THE NATIONAL PURPOSE

ELSEWHERE in this issue Stephen R. Graubard discusses the report of the Commission on National Goals, a body which was chartered by President Eisenhower "to develop a broad outline of national objectives and programs for the next decade and longer." This is not quite the same thing as a commission to explore the national purpose, but it is not entirely dissimilar either, and the fact that President Eisenhower set up such a group at all is significant.

The President is not, for one thing, a notably introspective man. For another, the Eisenhower name is inextricably associated with the nation's spiritual climate of the last eight years; suggestions that our sense of national purpose is vague can hardly sit too well with him. Nonetheless, the Commission on National Goals was appointed, and in establishing it Mr. Eisenhower must to some extent have been responding to the growing conviction that America is no longer as clear about its own aims and purposes as once it was.

It is, obviously, easier to define the national direction and purpose of a country like the Soviet Union than it is to pinpoint the aims of a free society. Ours is not, fortunately, a society welded into one striking fist by a totalitarian leadership. But even so, we do have a national purpose that is more than any sum of private ambitions—a national purpose which is half-buried, perhaps, in times of complacency ("the business of America," said Calvin Coolidge, "is business") but which is undeniably there.

To move from a general statement of national purpose to specific and limited goals is not, of course, easy, as the Commission on National Goals has discovered. Someone once described a camel as an animal that looked as if it has been put together by a committee, and in the case of the President's Commission it appears that another committee has produced still another camel. This is a result we regret. Defenders of the Commission may argue that if men of diverse views are to unite on a finished product, a certain patchwork quality is inevitable. We disagree.

Take, for example, the Declaration of Independence, which was the original statement of American intention. This was no pallid compromise, but a banner to which men everywhere repaired. Why should this be so? Why did a Declaration of Independence signed by a few men on a rude and distant shore stir the world? Was the appeal of the Declaration of Independence that of rhetoric, and its effect due simply to the felicity of its phrasing?

Surely not. Good phrasing there was, of course, but what counted was the substance, the idea. "We hold these truths to be self-evident," the Founding Fathers said: "That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. . . ." The Declaration is what it is and moved men as it did because it expressed high purpose and noble convictions, backed to the utmost by its signers with the pledge of "our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

There you have it, the American proclamation of freedom: the equality of all men; rights given not by the State but by our Creator; the just powers of government deriving only from the consent of the governed. Are these American beliefs which stirred men here and all over the world pious statements which are now irrelevant to our present situation?



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We insist they are not. Granted, to create policy for today and tomorrow in the light of these principles is not easy; in some situations a lack of power to change events may prevent us from doing what we would like to do. But the American idea and the American tradition must be the touchstones for policy, for there, in the very reasons for our nation's being, is America's strength.

The American idea is an abused phrase, and the reality behind it is often betrayed, as it is being betrayed in New Orleans right now; it is often hopelessly obscured, as when the United States delegates to the United Nations recently were forced to abstain from voting while the Soviet Union led a "crusade" against colonialism and freedom for all peoples. But despite our failures the American idea has not lost its power; in the same week in which those stories appeared, the newspapers carried another account, this one about a boy in Africa who walked two thousand miles to a coastal city in the hope that he could somehow reach America, a land whose location he did not even know but which in his mind was synonymous with freedom and justice.

As we make the best case we can for our refusal to vote against the colonial powers in the U.N.; as we debate whether we are able to defend ourselves adequately; as we wonder if we can afford to educate our children well; as we see Negroes barred, from both Southern schools and Northern suburbs—as we ponder all these things in our efforts to plan the future, we should not forget the boy in Africa who walked two thousand miles because of the power of the American idea. Perhaps then we will decide that what we most need is not to establish still another committee but to remember the basic beliefs which produced our nation in the first place.

## REACTORS: PEACEFUL AND OTHERWISE

WHEN IT WAS first revealed that Israel was constructing a nuclear reactor, there were expressions of intense concern in countries around the world—including, noticeably, the United States. When Israel subsequently asserted that the reactor was being constructed only for peaceful scientific purposes, and that students and scholars could feel free to examine the reactor when it was completed, the excitement subsided. And so too did the gibes at Russia and the United States for becoming so concerned that tiny Israel might be developing technology and equipment necessary to produce atomic bombs.

Well, the shouting and the twitting have died down, but there is still much to be concerned about. When a small, new country can, and does, produce a fair-sized reactor, and keep this secret even from its friends, we have confirmed dangers that were all too clearly foreseen. Israel's assurances that it will be used solely for "research purposes to develop scientific knowledge and thus to serve the needs of industry, agriculture, health and science" do not dispose of the dangers and problems. Nor are these much alleviated by the fact that the project needed help from another country, in this instance, France.

Some of the immediate dangers can be realized by considering Israel's present position. What, for example, will Israel do with the plutonium which the reactor is expected to produce as a by-product? Is this to be used, or sold to other countries? And why was there need for secrecy, even from friendly countries? Justified or not, the Arab countries will view this nuclear construction with some alarm. If demagoguery, to which no country is immune, needs something on which to focus in Arab countries, this could be it. Further, it allows the Soviets to play the role of a disinterested party, at once defending Israel's nationalism, (offended because it has been suspected) and rousing Arab fears.

These are only some of the problems which will inevitably be raised and discussed. And the discussions will go on, no matter what the assurances of Israel or the relations between Israel and other countries. To say this is to say nothing in particular about Israel and its likely intentions. A similar set of questions will attach themselves to any country that now develops the potential for nuclear warfare. And this, of course, is where lies the greatest danger.

The world is properly concerned over the destructive powers now possessed by Russia and the Western countries. Danger enough exists in our present situation of uneasy balance and tension. But the vision of additional countries controlling nuclear weapons—and thereby controlling, to some measure, decisions about future conflicts—does little to calm the troubled spirit or to simplify the complex problems we have yet to solve.

The one tangible bit of progress in the present situation is that Israel will probably make its reactor accessible to the system of safeguards advocated by the International Atomic Energy Agency. This allows for international inspection and the assurance that the reactor is devoted to the purposes Israel proclaims. It is true that Israel here may set a precedent that other countries may not choose to follow. It is not difficult to think of some countries



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that would resist international inspection. Nevertheless, precedents are not entirely without weight and continued discussion about Israel's peaceful reactor may yet have more value than the initial flare-ups would have suggested.

## THE "PEACE CORPS" PLAN

IF SENATOR John F. Kennedy had not been elected President, his "peace corps" plan might have faded into obscurity. At least it would have had more difficulty gaining the attention and support such a generalized plan needs before it comes to life. Now, however, a group with a rather unwieldy name—Committee on Educational Interchange Policy of the Institute of International Education—has submitted to Mr. Kennedy, a program which, if implemented, would flesh out the idea of the "peace corps" which he suggested during the Presidential campaign.

The Committee, under the chairmanship of Harlan Cleveland, suggested, for example, that the young people in the program would work through private and public agencies undertaking development projects in specific countries covered by the agreement; that the period of service be from one to three years; that the first group be limited to about one thousand to serve as a pilot group; that the participants receive a modest salary.

These are the kinds of proposals that must be considered before any "peace corps" plan becomes a reality. Even if all of these recommendations are not accepted, the Committee has, nevertheless, made a real contribution. What it has recommended must be considered along with other sound proposals, such as those for a Point Four Youth Corps which Representative Henry Reuss discussed in these pages last May. Without overestimating what a Youth Corps can accomplish, it is good to know there are continuing efforts to see that it will soon be formed.

## KEEPING FIT

FROM THE days of Calvin Coolidge's mechanical horse the American public has manifested lively curiosity in what each President does to get his exercise. John F. Kennedy, in his zest for the physically strenuous, takes things way back to the days of Theodore Roosevelt. His family touch-football games already have become a legend, and he also participates in such sports as sailing, tennis and swimming in an active way. (He even plays a good game of golf.) It is said that the White House tennis court is now to be subjected to hard usage, but more symbolic is the prospect that Mr. Eisenhower's White House putting green is to be plowed under and sown to lawn.

Such relish for various forms of physical exertion in the outdoors undoubtedly helped Mr. Kennedy to keep up his killing pace during the campaign; it should likewise serve him as a healthful counterbalance to the fearful tensions of office. It has now led him to write an article on "The Soft American" for *Sports Illustrated*. In this contribution, completed after the election, the President-elect expresses warm concern about the physical fitness of the nation's youth. Not only this, but he outlines what he proposes to do about this alleged deterioration in our physical fiber once he is in office. Others, too, must now take up the strenuous life.

In his article Mr. Kennedy marshals facts and figures the way he did so tellingly in his campaign. He cites fifteen years of research conducted at Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital in New York that shows several thousand Austrian, Italian and Swiss children to be markedly ahead of a comparable number of American children in muscular strength, flexibility, physical fitness. For example, thirty-five out of every hundred American children failed one or more of the five tests of strength given as compared to one out of every hundred Europeans. Further evidence comes from Yale University, where the percentage of entrants passing its physical fitness tests has declined from fifty-one to thirty-eight per cent in the space of a decade. He cites the high percentage of rejections by Selective Service.

Such findings cannot be wholly surprising in this "age of leisure and abundance" as manual labor declines, people drive rather than walk to school or work, and recreation takes the form of watching others. Mr. Kennedy did not go into the question of diet, but it is quite possible that the preponderance of soft white bread and rolls, sweets of all kinds and soft drinks on the national bill of fare may partly account for a lack of muscle tone. Few pastimes are less popular in this country than comparing Americans unfavorably to men and women of other lands. Yet can anyone believe that the many Europeans of all ages who use the bicycle as their principal means of locomotion (doubtless because they cannot afford a car) are not physically the better off for it? Perhaps it takes certain extra exertions like those involved in the Christmas holidays to demonstrate to us conclusively that we are not as physically fit as we might be.



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## MAYBE THIS WILL BE THE YEAR

WHAT WILL the New Year bring? Even in an editorial breast, hope springs eternal, and we can't help dreaming of the wild and wonderful things that probably won't but just might happen in the year of Our Lord 1961.

Maybe this will be the year, for instance, when the President of the United States causes a sensation at his press conference by correcting a newsman's grammar . . . when Norman Vincent Peale writes another bestseller, this one entitled *Some of My Best Friends Are Catholics* . . . when Frank Sinatra decides to chuck it all and settles down on a farm in Iowa to raise chickens and seek the simple life . . . when the American Legion sponsors a mammoth fund-raising rally for the benefit of the United Nations . . . when all the editors of The Commonweal, and John Cogley and William Clancy and Donald McDonald and others of that ilk decline with thanks the honor of becoming Knights of St. Gregory, or Malta, or something. . . .

Maybe this will be the year when Mort Sahl signs for a family drama series co-starring Loretta Young, Paul Anka and the entire Lawrence Welk orchestra . . . when the Atomic Energy Commission does not revise again (downward) its estimate of permissible radiation dosages . . . when the United States and its Latin American neighbors make some real progress in establishing a sense of community and understanding in this hemisphere . . . when the Postmaster General is too busy improving our scandalous postal service to declare even one classic an obscene work . . . when in the midst of a debate Paul Blanshard suddenly says, "Yes of course, what I'm advocating is totalitarian secularism and is as reprehensible as any other kind of totalitarianism. Why didn't I see that earlier?" . . . when men of good will in the South, who make up the vast majority, are able to free themselves of the grip of obstructionists and fanatics who prevent their working together on the problems they face. . . .

Maybe 1961 will be the year when Father John Courtney Murray rebuts an argument by saying, "Well, maybe it isn't reasonable, but that's the way I feel about it" . . . when Chancellor Adenauer finds a suitable eighty-year-old member of the younger generation to take his place in West Germany's first office . . . when American Catholics are not informed by some European Catholic—in Spain, say, or Italy—that the Church really can't thrive under the American system . . . when Bennett Cerf says, "Stop me if—" and somebody stops him . . . when NATO becomes an instrument designed to function usefully in a world situation utterly unlike the one in which it was born . . . when William Buckley begins his column, "Thunder on the Right," in the New York *Post*, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. becomes an editor of the *National Review*. . . .

Maybe this will be the year of years when the United States and the Soviet Union simultaneously send men to the moon and find it so crowded with Martians that there's no place to park their space ships . . . when the world starts thinking of Africa not just as a trouble spot but as the stage for the next great surge of human hope, drive and accomplishment . . . when the world's nuclear powers—the U.S., the U.S.S.R., Britain, France, Israel, China, West Germany, Egypt, Yugoslavia, Portugal, Ethiopia, Albania and Monaco—decide that things are getting out of hand and nuclear controls and disarmament must be achieved . . . when the Long Island Railroad announces a big reduction in commuter fares . . . when Barry Goldwater becomes executive vice president of Americans for Democratic Action . . . when the Legion of Decency announces that a new crop of movies are wholesome enough, but just too dreary for words. . . .

Maybe 1961 will also be the year when Reinhold Niebuhr scolds us for dwelling on man's feet of clay and argues for more positive thinking . . . when the Congressional committees are at least to some extent pried loose from the Southern Democratic-conservative Republican stranglehold . . . when the Office of Civil Defense and Mobilization solicits the opinions and advice of Dorothy Day . . . when Father Ginder actually reads a copy of The Commonweal . . . when Senator Byrd finds the federal budget entirely inadequate to the nation's needs and warns against being penny wise and pound foolish . . . when through man's vision, his courage and strength, through luck—and through God's grace—something like peace comes to the world. . . .

Maybe this will be the year we've waited for, when The Commonweal's editors don't receive in the same day's mail an assortment of letters telling them the last issue of the magazine proves: 1. they've lost their old-time courage and have become comfortable and conformist; 2. they're the same dangerous radicals they always were; 3. they are rigid, closed-minded Catholics, imprisoned by an inflexibile, authoritarian system; 4. they are free-wheeling liberals—or Liberals—without any discernible convictions or beliefs; 5. they are, simply on general principles, obnoxious in the extreme; 6. the truth, which is that they are true blue, steadfast and lovable, and best wishes of the season to all of you too.



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# The Nation's Goals

*The National Goals Commission set itself an impossible task—it wanted to use empirical data to support rhetorical propositions*

by STEPHEN R. GRAUBARD

WHEN THE New York *Times,* which is not noted for its editorial acerbity, speaks of the National Goals Commission report as a disappointment, "hardly likely to excite many imaginations or to unloose any great wave of creative enthusiasm among our people," it may be taken for granted that the report is something less than a heroic statement calculated to survive the decade which it seeks to describe. A study of the document confirms the New York *Times'* judgment; it is a dreary piece, lacking many qualities, not the least being "vision," the one absolutely necessary ingredient for all prophecy.

Why should such a distinguished body of men have failed so completely in their mission? The New York *Times* editorial suggests that opinions in the group may have been too various and that the result is "emphasis upon compromise at a lowest common denominator of agreement." If the bland and too general recommendations were in fact the result of a negotiated settlement, then one or more member might now, if given the opportunity, publish independently a more spirited and persuasive document. That no such report will be forthcoming is absolutely certain; that there was never any chance of one being produced is a matter which may be argued.

President Eisenhower, in establishing the Goals Commission, acted in a spirit which, superficially, resembled what the British monarch does in appointing a Royal Commission. In Britain, distinguished and disinterested men are enjoined to acquaint themselves with the facts of a given situation and to make recommendations to the Government useful in formulating new legislation. While these inquiries are sometimes far-reaching, extending into various complex fields, there are always boundaries imposed by specific instruction, custom, and common sense. With the Commission presided over by Henry Wriston, there were no boundaries, but only an injunction to study America's needs in the coming decade, to prepare the country for the challenges in prospect.

Neither a Solon nor a Solomon would have been adequate to this task. That so many prominent Americans gave much time and effort to it is proof of an idealism which almost passes belief. The Commission was asked to prepare an account of where we stand today and where we hope (or need) to be in 1970. In this reckoning, quantitative and qualitative data were recklessly mixed, state and private effort joined, individual and group action confounded, and all were treated as part of a national picture in which decisions plotted now could be expected to have some relevance five and even ten years hence. Our age has become so habituated to *planning* that it cannot understand that the prophesying of steel output or the proposing of a school-building program is an essentially different kind of enterprise from the enforcing of equality among citizens or the construction of an educational system of unquestioned excellence.

The notion that in a free society legislation will operate to produce the consequences intended, and that the state will be able to "guide" individuals and groups to the desired (and, by definition, desirable) ends which the majority have fixed, shows a confidence in both the state and human nature for which history offers scant excuse. What makes this whole exercise so dubious is that it is based on a false premise, namely, that we know where we are, that we understand where we are going, and that what we decide will not be fundamentally altered by decisions taken by others. Worse than that, it assumes that the decision to have "better education," for example, is the critical decision, and that its implementation is simply a matter of finding funds, overcoming legislative (Congressional) opposition, and gaining popular support. By these standards everything becomes deceptively easy—not only possible, but probable.

Mr. Graubard is a member of the department of history at Harvard. This is his second appearance in The Commonweal.



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THE GOALS COMMISSION set itself an impossible task—it wanted to employ empirical data to support rhetorical propositions which lacked any sort of real substance. In its recommendations on education, for example, it succeeded neither in providing a blueprint for a school system adequate to the needs of young people in their professional and civic responsibilities, nor did it explain how such a reformed educational complex would foster democratic sentiments. To have done one or the other would have required more than an examination of education machinery—it would have necessitated an estimate of the role of these institutions in the lives of young people subject to pressures substantially different from those which existed even as recently as two decades ago. A theory of education, in the broadest sense, going far beyond the counting of schools, the appointment of qualified teachers, and the fixing of curricula, would have been called for. It was this larger aspect of the educational problem which the Commission chose not even to consider.

Since most important problems include a normative as well as an objective component, it is a mistake to imagine that they may be treated as matters involving nothing more than self-evident or easily discovered factual truths. However important the search for an answer may be, the formulation of a proper question has clear precedence. To pose the question, for example, of how the United States will defend itself in the coming decade, is to require the anticipation of all contingencies which may occur. Working on those which appear as the more likely prospects, it becomes necessary to estimate material as well as moral strength, and hazard a guess on how particular resources will in fact be employed in an emergency.

All of these operations depend upon the imagination, working in close alliance with tangible fact. It makes no more sense to describe an Asian policy for 1970 essentially like the one we pursue today (which is what the Goals Commission has done) than it would have been to project our 1950 African policy into the present. Only by recognizing that we will not be in the position a decade hence that we find ourselves in today is there any possibility of preparing for the future. The unexpected will always happen, but some preparation is possible through imaginative leaps, most of which will prove to have been simply speculative. Imponderables cannot be entirely forseen, but tomorrow's facts are in almost all instances today's educated guesses.

The idiom of the Goals Commission report is strange; it betrays either intellectual confusion or the hazards of joint composition. While some of it is couched in language redolent of the eighteenth century, most of it suggests a political party platform in the summer of 1960. Interspersed with impressively noble sentiments are crude, almost neo-Marxist ideals which reek of the materialist lamp. What is one to make, for example, of the phrase "we have ever more closely approached a classless society"? Is this factually so? Why should the claim be made? Alexis de Tocqueville, more than a century ago, recognized that privilege as Europeans understood the concept had no place in America. The United States lacked an aristocracy—it boasted only the rich and the poor. Whether wealth and poverty today are more intimately tied, and whether men are materially and intellectually in closer communion than they were at some earlier date in our history is by no means certain. Whether, in fact, this situation would be desirable is not self-evident; parts of the Wriston report suggest that it would not.

In discussing reforms of governmental institutions, for example, much is made of the fact that they "require improvement but not drastic change." The most urgent reform is the introduction of persons at the higher levels of the civil service "equal in competence and imagination to those in private business and the professions." How does the Commission propose to accomplish this? By the simple device of a "drastic increase in their compensation," a formula which seems never to fail for all drastic ailments. Theoretically, this will open the path to what the report calls a "true senior civil service." While no one would wish to minimize the importance of substantial salaries in the public service, it is curious that such weight is placed on this alone. If an examination were made of either British or French experience in this matter, it would be seen that the establishment of a high-quality civil service is not integrally related to a high-income expectancy. In any case, if public services are administered by high-salaried officers, wielding great powers, what happens to the idea of the "classless society," which we are said to be steadily approaching?

IT IS IMPORTANT that my meaning not be misconstrued. The recruitment of able men and women for the arduous public duties characteristic of modern life is certainly a first responsibility on government. That these people need to be adequately—even handsomely—paid, is obvious. One should not imagine, however, that the problem is solved when the salary scale is altered. The absence of a highly professional and dedicated civil service in this country reflects political and intellectual situations which are not economic in their origin. If the government is to be better served, then the whole complex of personal ambition needs to take a quite other form. This is as much a problem for universities and schools as for families and television stations. If new standards of service are to develop, then new criteria need to be conceptualized and communicated. The problem is not to persuade a gifted and highly-paid Wall Street lawyer or broker to quit New York for Washington. Rather, it



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is to make some men as willing to serve the public interest as others are to serve the private, and for each to show a style of life which reflects the dignity and sense of his choice.

The Goals Commission devotes a section of its report to "The Arts and Sciences." In this, perhaps as much as in any other part of the statement, the language is conventional, the ideas banal, and the purposes confused. No one will be surprised to learn that "knowledge and innovation must be advanced on every front," and that basic research, particularly in science, deserves the highest priority. The arts are termed "a vital part of human experience," and society is called upon to "stimulate and support richer cultural fulfillment."

Perhaps the remedies for the "revitalization" of the theater will serve to indicate the originality of this section of the report. The theater, it is argued, "must have the kind of support in universities, colleges, and communities that will give it greater strength at the roots." Whether university or college dramatics have in fact made significant contributions in the past, or whether a theater can be revitalized from such sources, the Commission never stops to ask. How "communities," which seem scarcely able to maintain necessary social services, will come suddenly to recognize the utility of a theater, is never explained.

The problem of creativity is at the center of any study of the arts and sciences, but the report contains few, if any, specific proposals for the encouraging of creative effort. That every would-be scientist should be supported in his educational pursuits is a commendable idea, which no one will think to resist. What, however, of the others, whose usefulness is perhaps less immediately apparent? How is a painter or a poet to be encouraged? What conditions are propitious for his work? How much can the society do for him? Who ought to help? Have the foundations been sufficiently bold and imaginative in this area? How effective has their patronage been in other places? Have foundations ever examined their benefactions with a sufficiently critical eye to see whether the books that were promised have ever been written, the experiments performed, and the works of art produced? These are not rhetorical questions. If the arts are not to be treated as adornment, thought about after other more serious matters are attended to, then a careful study must be made of the conditions of creation. Until the young are actually encouraged, and not simply by the building of new schools, until the new and the experimental are really valued, and not regarded as bizarre, and until the supreme importance of individual effort is admitted, most recommendations must appear hollow.

THE PRESIDENT was wrong to place the task of prophecy in the hands of a Commission. He would have done better to commission a dozen individual reports, by persons as various as the nation produces. Had he done so, he would have had nothing very definitive, but he might have encouraged some outlandish prophecy, which, by its sheer boldness, might have come close to defining the world we will in fact inhabit a decade hence. The magnificence of such a work would certainly not have been appreciated, any more than an accurate prophecy, in 1940, of our present plight. But if such a statement had existed, there would have been a standard by which others might also have thought to test their imaginations.

The Goals Commission report is filled with commendable general recommendations, but it offers no instruction to any individual citizen in what he might do now, tomorrow, at home, in his family, in his work, in his community. There is continued praise of individualism, but not a single reference to any individual act which may serve as a model or a goad. If the individual can in fact accomplish so much by the mere exercise of his will, where is the example which he is enjoined to emulate? On this, as on so many other critical matters, the report is silent.

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## THE DART

*For R.W.B.*

When I was six, one summer's night,
I and a cousin crossed the lawn
To try until the light was gone
To strike the target propped in weeds,
Which game could scarcely serve our needs.
Chatting, our elders scanned the sight.

Vaguely my mother stanched her scream
As I hove pleasant to the porch.
Her pointing finger's crabbed research
Led me to note much blood had spilled
And marvel that my calf still held
A dart as painless as a dream.

Swiftly my father dialed the phone.
Came with carbolic. In tenderness
Applied huge doses to the mess——
The marvel burned and burned and burned
And, when the doctor came, we learned
I had been scorched down to the bone.

Cousin, had you but caused your dart
To strike where pain were better felt,
Mother might not have had to melt
And Father had been spared my blame
And pleasure been no weedy game
And pain the target of my art.

DAVID GALLER.



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*An American reports on*
*a visit to Soviet Central Asia*

# To the Tomb of Tamerlane

by JAMES KRITZECK

SOON IT will represent no distinction to have visited Tashkent, the capital of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Uzbekistan. This boom city of a million persons, much the largest in Soviet Asia, maintains the principal airport connecting European Russia with south and east Asia. And with the general relaxation of travel restrictions and the tremendous increase in the number of visitors to the Soviet Union, Tashkent is already within easy reach of the most casual and bored of tourists.

There is not much left of the old city. The single sixteenth-century *madrasah* (Moslem school), now the seat of the Grand Mufti of Central Asia, is barely recognizable as such; its colored tiles have fallen and been replaced by the bilious pastel paints which are characteristic of Bolshevik Russia. Tashkent has chosen (or been chosen) to be a thoroughly modern city and even a showpiece of sorts. It has everything the Soviets are proud of and want foreigners to see: wide avenues, housing developments, parks "of culture and rest," minor industrial projects, agricultural exhibitions, an opera house, an art museum (full of bad studio copies) and a historical museum which illustrates man's passage from the cave to the Comintern.

Tashkent is highly charged with a progressive vitality which is not directed, as is the case in East Berlin, merely to show. Its people smile. Even the smallest shops are filled with a variety of new products. Its bustling new hotel, complete with colored lights, golden velvet drapes, Austrian curtains and outsized chandeliers, is a triumph of modern Soviet peasant taste. Here Uzbeks, Tadzhiks and Tartars, knowing leisure for the first time in their lives, fairly trample the tourists in the "smart" restaurant for the somewhat capitalistic pleasures of paying outrageous prices for food and drink and of hearing a dauntless chanteuse belt out spiced-up folk songs by the hour.

Unfortunately, most visitors see no more of Soviet Central Asia than Tashkent, precisely what they are meant to see, although some few do travel northeast to Alma-Ata, a popular resort town in Kazakhstan, for the magnificent view of the Tien Shan (Mountains of Heaven) beyond which lies Chinese Turkestan. The more thoughtful and perceptive among them, however, must surely leave Uzbekistan with an impression, pieced together from many possible sources and only heightened once they visit other parts of the Soviet Union, of the existence of something quite unique, which the natives have been calling "Middle Asia." That impression is valid, significant and worthy of pursuit.

THERE IS MORE to Soviet Central Asia, of course, than Uzbekistan. It also includes Kazakhstan (itself larger than all of Western Europe), Turkmenistan, Tadzhikistan and Kirghizia—tens of millions of people spread out from the Urals to the Caspian to the borders of China and Mongolia, from Stalingrad to Kashmir. Nevertheless, Uzbekistan strongly and mysteriously dominates the area and provides it with focus. This Uzbekistan does, I would contend, not because it contains Tashkent but because it contains the centers of the most enduring advanced civilization that this area has ever known, the Moslem Mongol civilization embodied in the empire of Tamerlane (Timur) in the fourteenth century and reverently preserved by the Uzbeks.

To pursue "Middle Asia," therefore, it is necessary to travel not northeast but southwest from Tashkent to the fabulous capitals of Tamerlane at Samarkand and Kokhara. This is still a rather difficult and even dangerous undertaking. The transportation is least painfully accomplished by means of semi-scheduled little planes whose pilots look like Teddy-boys and whose stewardesses are given to opening the doors of the planes in flight "to get a little air." The territory over which one flies is bleak and largely uninteresting except for the ubiquitous valleys of the Jaxartes and the Oxus. It is, however, a territory of the greatest historical importance; it is the doorway through which Alexander the Great entered Central Asia on his way to India and through which innumerable peoples, for instance the Turks and the Mongols, have returned his visit.

Samarkand is the first stop. The huge silvered statues of Lenin and Stalin at the airport give a false first impression (here, as throughout the Soviet Union,

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representations of Khrushchev are rare; but here even de-Stalinization has proceeded slowly), for Samarkand possesses a remarkably intelligent and efficient branch of the Intourist organization, and it is possible to enjoy more freedom in this city than anywhere else in the Soviet Union.

Nothing short of total destruction could spoil the beauty of Samarkand, which twenty-three centuries have served to confirm. Its most impressive monument is the Gur Emir, Tamerlane's tomb. Under a breath-taking ribbed blue dome, in a chamber of pure jasper, under a graceful cenotaph of milky green jade from China, lie the bones of Timur the Lame, greatest of the world-conquerors. "Were I alive today," the inscription runs, "mankind would tremble."

The chief local hero is not Tamerlane, however, but his grandson Ulug Beg, a greater builder and (what is vastly more important in context) a sharp-tongued freethinking scientist. Ulug's astronomical observatory, by far the best-equipped in medieval times, was recently discovered outside the city within close sight of the Afrosiab, where Alexander married Roxana. Ulug's *madrasah* dominates the Registan, the central square of Samarkand which Lord Curzon described in 1888 as "the noblest public square in the world," and it is Ulug's memory which hovers about the superb tombs and shrines near the Shaykh Zindeh, the monument to the eight century "Living King" who is believed to be alive in its cistern, carrying his head beneath one arm and readying himself to reclaim his kingdom. Tamerlane reasserts himself only at the ruins of the mosque dedicated to his favorite Chinese wife Bibi-khanum. There are marvellous love stories connected with the building of this mosque, at whose original proportions the imagination boggles. The gigantic main dome has collapsed, leaving a jagged, menacing half-dome as witness to its past glory.

The people of Samarkand do not appear to frequent these monuments, preferring instead the park "of culture and rest," but it is obvious from conversation that they feel very strongly about them. The Uzbeks are immensely, almost savagely proud of being the heirs to the Timurid empire. Elsewhere the Soviets may and do destroy useless "reactionary" monuments of religious significance, but in Samarkand these monuments are being carefully and lovingly restored. Rooms in the *madrasahs* which once housed students of the Koran now house experimental workshops in which the secrets of Timurid tiling are being rediscovered.

SMALLER and more primitive in every way than Samarkand, Bokhara offers its visitors no conveniences, innumerable annoyances (among which the giant flies and perpetually barking dogs might be singled out) and a clearer picture of the nature and origins of "Middle Asia." Only two Europeans are known to have visited this "forbidden" city between 1054 and 1850. There is still no Intourist office and the city cannot really be considered "open." Two years ago it required Khrushchev's personal intervention to enable Sir Fitzroy Maclean, Bokhara's best English publicist, to revisit the city.

The major part of the dusty old city of Bokhara has been left completely to itself while the stately city walls have been pulled down to make room for a new city to develop on its outskirts. The residents consider this a remarkably happy solution; it would be unthinkable for them that this city of a (hyperbolic) thousand mosques which throughout medieval times was called "Qutb al-Alam" (the Axis of the World) should be subjected to any essential change.

The Manar-i Kalyan (Tower of Death) is the city's most famous landmark; it is a stout, pleasantly-decorated minaret from which condemned prisoners used to be thrown to their deaths. Nearby is the handsome "Ark," the Emir's palace, and the prison where less fortunate prisoners were consumed in pits by specially-bred poisonous reptiles and vermin. On the day I visited the prison a Tatar chieftain and his womenfolk had chosen it as a picnic site.

The fact that Bokhara and its environs bitterly held out as an independent emirate until 1920 is an expression of the more significant fact that it regarded itself as a center of power and culture absolutely alien to the Bolshevik dream. Culturally Bokhara is a part of Iran—more so even than Samarkand, which seems to preserve more of the Mongol and Chinese influences of Timurid times. Outwardly it is still the medieval Moslem city which educated almost every great thinker in Eastern Islam from 850 to 1200. Although its bazaars no longer (but only since about 1870) trade in Circassian slaves, they are indistinguishable from those of Isfahan and Shiraz. It seems to cause a slight embarrassment on everybody's part, including Khrushchev's, that Bokhara is a part of the Soviet Union at all. Atop every tall building in the city are great storks' nests, a sign of good fortune among Moslems. But the birds can fly south during the winter.

ONE WOULD be justified in supposing that the group-feeling of the "Middle Asians" is rooted, therefore, in the Islamic faith. But that does not seem in any literal sense to be the case. To the contrary, Islam as a religion appears to be dying a rapid death in Soviet Central Asia—a unique instance, so far as I know, of this phenomenon. I questioned many persons, young and old, all with Moslem names like Mohammed, Aishah, Abdullah or Hafiz, as to whether or not they considered themselves Moslems. The reply of a young Uzbek in Samarkand was typical. "I can't say I'm not a Moslem," he told me, "but I don't pray or read the Koran; I eat pork and I drink vodka." "Do you believe



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in God?" I asked him. "As a matter of fact, no." he replied.

One Friday noon, the principal Moslem prayer-time, I went to the only officially functioning mosque in Bokhara (there are others); some thirty ragged old men, mostly septuagenarians, attended the service. The Divan Begi, one of Bokhara's prettiest mosques, has been converted into a pool-hall, which is well attended at all hours. Part of the Great Mosque has been leased to a furniture factory. A sad end for Islam's "Axis of the World"! The Grand Mufti in Tashkent told us that the Soviet government does not actively restrict Islam; those who believe and wish publicly to demonstrate their faith may do so. Yet he has only a hundred seminarians out of a nominally Moslem population of over twenty million and admits that the number is steadily decreasing. The pilgrimage to Mecca is rare. Polygamy is unknown.

One night in Samarkand I fell in with a group of fellow-Czechs, poor devils who wished they were in Paris, and we were joined by some cordial and curious Samarkandians at the park "of culture and rest," one of those amalgams of carnival, political convention and night-club which provides satisfactory diversion for so many Soviets. We ended by toasting the greatest races on earth—the Uzbeks, Tadzhiks, Kazakhs and Czechs! There was no mention of Russians. Nevertheless, there is no appreciable anti-Russian sentiment. Although Russians occupy many positions of importance in Central Asia, they have been careful to elevate Central Asians as well and to utilize rather than alienate this "Middle Asian" nationalism.

Nationalism it is, for it appears to be entirely racial and cultural. The Revolution has brought a greater sense of unity, to be sure; but the particular unity which has most meaning for these peoples is a unity of Central Asian races sharing a common cultural heritage. One can actually purchase lithographs of al-Biruni and ibn-Sina (Avicenna), medieval Moslem philosophers, on the streets. They are now heroes of "Middle Asia." One can elicit criticism of Soviet foreign policy, even some sympathy for Francis Gary Powers, but the proposition that Avicenna was a Persian will throw "Middle Asians" into a rage.

The people of Soviet Central Asia are honestly friendly, by contrast to the Russians whose forwardness and consuming curiosity are often mistaken for friendliness. They drink lustily and smoke much—after a complicated procedure of rolling processed cigarettes flat; there is an excellent local champagne, which the Russians consume to the tune of thirty million bottles annually, to aid their conviviality. Russia proper is very, very remote. At the present time there are no important obstacles to their feeling "Middle Asian" with pride. Although this is a traditional area for Bolshevik exile (beginning with Trotsky), full of Jews (the old Jewish community of Bokhara was shocked to learn that there were Jews anywhere else in the world), amputees, deportees and assorted "lost peoples," its natives can concentrate upon historical memories and monuments, a newly-found prosperity, an increasing local literature and art and those vistas, flowers and fruits which have to be acknowledged to be the best in the world.

It may be a long time before Soviet Central Asia comes into direct and intimate contact with the non-Soviet world; but it may be an equally long time, involving much education and self-searching, before it realizes fully what it means to be a part of the Soviet Union. Theoretically it is composed of nations which could secede from that Union at any time. If there were to be a plebiscite today, I think it not impossible that its inhabitants would vote for an independent "Middle Asia," tied to Russia and de-Islamized like Turkey, but jealously guarding and exalting a certain unity of its own which the Soviet system, left to its chemistry, must inevitably destroy.

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**TOPIC OF THE DAY**

# Europe and Unity

by THOMAS MOLNAR

SHORTLY AFTER the last war, Henri de Man, in *Beyond Nationalism,* expressed the opinion that " 'Europe' has no traditional roots as a political community, and will always be, rather than an institutional concept, a spiritual idea for a small minority of educated people." Any traveler in Europe today, some thirteen years after this prediction, may realize that continental unity, in one form or another, is the topic of the day, the one *idée-force* which stirs the imagination of intellectuals, politicians and businessmen.

Compared to this problem, Communism, colonial-

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ism, and rapports with the United States or the United Nations seems only secondary in the minds of Europeans, or, to put it in a better way, they are weighed in relation to the subject of unity. The fact of being discussed does not mean, however, that a European federation or confederation is considerably nearer to materialization than it was thirteen years ago when it seemed indeed remote to such a lucid observer as Henri de Man. In judging the European situation, we in America must be particularly careful not to imagine that a subject debated is a matter concluded. At a distance—and even travelers are prone to carry with them a built-in home-perspective—Europe appears to be either a potential entity where abstract decisions will be easily rubber stamped, or a homogeneous unit with interests and views similar from Paris to Athens, from Madrid to Helsinki.

But a few months' immersion in the European atmosphere and conversations with thoughtful men in several countries open one's eyes to the most important reality of the continent: its extreme diversity, the deep roots of its *situations acquises,* the indestructible nature of its regional, national, and partisan feelings. The tourist's rapid travels do not allow him to anchor his impressions below the surface; but even he may gain a horizontal perspective which enables him to reject as naive, superficial and dangerous any plan of unification stressing the element of urgency. At the risk of being charged with lacking the "bold and imaginative" ideas that every progressive person carries these days in his executive case, I daresay that if Europe is ever to become a *patrie,* that day is many, many decades away.

On the other hand, we must be aware that European unity is a powerful *idea,* pregnant with far-reaching possibilities whose course and terminal point cannot even be guessed at this time. I find it particularly reassuring from the point of view of the continent's future that this *idea* is debated by all the representatives of European thought, not merely by technocrats and planners to whom it would naturally appeal. The extreme variety of views expressed—the enthusiasm of some, the reticence of others, the sympathy or hostility of still others—creates a climate of critical thinking in which any idea worth its weight can mature and give birth to others.

PUT IN ITS simplest terms, the immediate incentive for unity is the danger of Russia and of Communism at the doorstep of Western Europe since Yalta. There is, of course, a paradox in the present situation of Europen defenses: despite American pressure, the nations of Europe drag their feet and contribute to the NATO forces only with considerable delay and reluctance. Thus when they, particularly Adenauer and de Gaulle, express distrust concerning American determination to remain the "shield" of Europe, one could answer them that by going their own way, and building up their national striking power at the expense of arms integration, they offer in turn little guarantee to America.

Yet everybody agrees that after the Russian danger, the second motive for European unity is the geographical remoteness of America, its specific political interests, and the hesitant nature of its leadership. The U.S. intervention at Suez in 1956 and the joint American-Soviet *démarche* at that time are still the most popular argument for forging a Europe independent of American policies. Last summer's American pressure on Belgium in the Congo crisis and the precipitated reception of Lumumba at the White House have further strengthened the view that Europe can count only on itself when its extra-continental interests are at stake.

But the external reasons, however cogent, are only secondary. Like ideas in general, that of the unity of Europe, once launched, has begun to live its own life, producing new arguments from within itself. Those who discuss it in books, in the press, at symposia or in parliaments are divided along the lines of traditional partisanships, national and ideological. Thus one may distinguish a "rightist" and a "leftist" approach, a German, French, or British solution, nationalist advocates of unity "from above" and Jacobian enthusiasts for unity "from below." At any rate, the question of unilty is thus put in terms of European realities which guarantees that the eventual solution will not be a prefabricated system without roots in the past and without a careful consideration of partial interests.

At his press conference on September 5, General de Gaulle uttered words of great realism and wisdom when he asserted that it would be precarious to build the European edifice on anything but the existing sovereign States. Paying tribute to the "technical value" of such organizations as the Coal-and-Steel Agency, he went on saying that since ultimate authority resides with governments, it is only their *consent to cooperate* which can represent the foundations of more cohesive forms to come. De Gaulle's position, "old-fashioned" as it seems, is based on an intimate knowledge of the affairs of the world and of men. In spite of the constant flow of talk about world government, general

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disarmament, and the over-all interests of mankind being vested in the United Nations, de Gaulle is convinced that, as he wrote in the third volume of his *Mémoires,* "no ordeal changes the nature of man, and no crisis that of the State." In other words, the General believes that the greatness of Europe is to remain *l'Europe des patries,* since no government will ever have the moral right or the willingness to alienate its sovereignty or the essential parts of its defenses.

What he proposes, then,—and his views represent *one* of the currents of thought about the subject—is cooperation on the level of governments and of parliamentary delegations, with a Europe-wide secretariat as the permanent element of the structure. He insists, however, that the functionaries of such "European" institutions as the Coal-and-Steel Agency, etc., should have consultative rights only, since the ultimate decisions must rest with the national governments themselves.

De Gaulle's position may appear "reactionary" in the sense that he considers the "European" civil servants in a way homeless, *apatrides.* Of course, he does not use this term in referring to them; but he did mention at the press conference the recent difficulties arising from the coal problem, in which the Agency proved powerless and had to ask the respective governments to work out a solution. The same national preoccupations, perhaps more subtly camouflaged, appear in de Gaulle's idea of organizing a Europe-wide referendum in unity, after the cooperating bodies had been in place for some time. Evidently, he has no doubt that the result of such referendum would be positive; indeed, carried away by the organs of public opinion, press, radio, parliamentary speeches, and impressed by the existence of the organisms of cooperation, the public would, in all probability, have no hesitancy in ratifying the accomplished fact.

While de Gaulle may be genuinely persuaded of the necessity of European collaboration, he remains adamant on the issue of continental integration. He knows too much history to imagine that the present situation may not end one day, and that new alliances may not be imposed on its members. In other words, he intends to cooperate in the face of the present danger—Russian aggression, American softness—but not to commit France once and for all to a heavy and complex political-military-economic machinery from which it could not extricate herself should the need arise. When it comes to war, he said last September, people are willing to fight for family and homeland, not for the Coal-and-Steel Community.

IT GOES WITHOUT saying that Dr. Adenauer is more a utopian thinker on political matters than de Gaulle; yet even though he shares the general world view of his French partner, the situation he faces is quite different. As a result, the "European" concepts of the two men differ.

There is every sign that the Chancellor considers his own direction of the post-war destinies of West Germany a happy event, not likely to occur twice in the course of the century. Indeed, for the past hundred years this is the first time that Germany is prosperous, free, and respected, neither threatened nor threatening; and this thanks to Adenauer, to the men he has chosen as collaborators, and to the steady alliance he managed to build up with Germany's neighbors in Western Europe and with the United States.

Adenauer's problem is to help build a European structure in which Germany may keep its present structure. In this respect it is instructive to talk with German politicians and intellectuals who, even if they are political opponents of the Chancellor, display one central preoccupation which is apparently his too: how to prevent another outbreak of German aggression, another mystique built on a new eastward drive, another excessive growth of the military spirit. There are two parallel means to achieve this (and to secure German defenses at the same time): the first is the maintenance of good relations with the United States through economic ties and military presence; the second is integration with a Europe-wide system, even if this means, for the time being, a certain form of French domination.

But if Adenauer accepts the role of France as a kind of senior partner, he insists on the construction of Europe by strengthening the already existing bodies and agencies, and by devising new ones, each representing a new tie linking Germany to France and to its other European partners. He is not hostile to a Europe-wide suffrage resulting in a European assembly which is clearly not what de Gaulle proposes. Last, not least, Adenauer wants to secure the cooperation of Great Britain in order to create a three-headed instead of a two-headed Europe (France-Germany-England), and because he understands that England, outside the continental system and fearing the hegemony of one or another power, has always been a factor of unrest. (Did Macmillan not confide to Eisenhower last spring that he considered de Gaulle's attempt at establishing French hegemony over the continent a threat similar to Napoleon's and Hitler's essentially anti-British organization of Europe?)

Between the plans, respectively sponsored by de Gaulle and Adenauer, there is a wide area of conciliation and further inventiveness. Almost everybody agrees that close union, even a federation are to be avoided—at least for the time being. First of all, even in the present form of Common Market there is a grave divergence of interest. To mention only one example, the favorable trade balance that France now has with the Soviet Union and its satellites cannot be jeop-



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ardized, the French argue, as a result of Bonn's new retaliatory policy on the Berlin issue. The French are determined to expand rather than restrict trade with the Soviet bloc, particularly as they are convinced that the Bonn government will soon be forced to negotiate with East Germany, under the pressure of its own industrialists.

Considerations of a more complex nature lead Professor H. C. Allen to oppose Great Britain's joining the Common Market. The argument of his *The Anglo-American Predicament* is that England's interests are still on the seas, in close cooperation with the greatest naval power, the United States. England thus cannot align herself with a continental system which may one day oblige her to break with the United States.

In addition to the economic-political differences, there are the structural ones. One can simply not imagine an across-the-border electoral system (as it is suggested by those who favor the "denationalization" of parliamentary deputies) in which the Danish voter would cast his bulletin for an Italian representative, etc. At a time when most countries face a more or less hidden crisis of parliamentary democracy, such a project would further reduce the representativeness of members. Moreover, political parties which theoretically share the same ideology would in fact be unable to present a unified platform (and, of course, they do insist on paying a political role in a united Europe) since enormous differences separate, for example, the socialist parties of England, Sweden, Germany and France.

But suppose national parliaments would remain what they are now; how would common policy matters be affected by periodic national elections, by, let us say, a new Labor government in England, advocating unilateral nuclear disarmament in face of France's nuclear *force de frappe* on which de Gaulle insists, and in the face of the German Bundeswehr's recent demands to be equipped with atomic weapons?

I REPEAT THAT these are only some of the difficulties which readily come to mind; at this time it is simply impossible to imagine how they could be solved. Thus the wisest course seems to be that recommended by M. Alain Peyrefitte, Gaullist deputy and representative at the European parliamentary assembly. Writing a series of articles in *Le Monde* about "The Future of Europe," M. Peyrefitte puts forward a plan for confederation which would have the advantage of reassuring apprehensions on all sides, and yet making some concrete steps in the desired direction. He stresses the importance of government initiative, thus assimilating de Gaulle's view: "Authority may only derive from those who hold the legitimate power," he writes, admitting that on lower echelons each agency tends to over-emphasize its partial interests and requires anyway a higher coordinating body. The second point is perhaps the most significant among M. Peyrefitte's proposals insofar as the writer would confer priority on the coordination of *foreign policy* and *defense*. Indeed, with the existing stipulations of the Treaty of Rome, *economic* cooperation, in spite of the difficulties mentioned above, is not likely to diminish anyway.

In a further point, the *Monde* article stresses the importance of *gradualness* even in the frequency of inter-governmental meetings, until the habit of consultation might take institutional forms. Only then would popular suffrage consecrate the results.

The fact that M. Peyrefitte's text appeared in *Le Monde* indicates two things: that it may win the endorsement of liberal-progressive circles in France and elsewhere, and that the apprehensions of nationalist milieux—in France as well as in Germany—were sufficiently considered. Naturally, the biggest problem of all, allaying Britain's fears and reversing many centuries' British policies, has not been answered. It is obvious, on the other hand, that such British trial balloons as the one sent up by the Manchester *Gurdian* a few weeks ago concerning the evacuation of West Berlin and the transfer of its population to a newly constructed Berlin, touch off an immediate and violent German reaction. If one has visited Germany recently as I have done, it is evident to one that the West Germans are seriously attached to their old capital and would not settle for such a typical engineering solution as the *Guardian's,* which makes light of tradition, moral roots, and the rights of people.

The difficulties persist, and, as I have said above, European unity is not for tomorrow. As M. Peyrefitte writes, those who have heard at the Oympic Games in Rome with what fervor the French sang the Marseillaise and the Germans chanted "Deustch-land, Deutsch-land" after each athletic success of their own, know that it would be a tragic mistake to underestimate national sentiments and pretend to replace them with a non-existent European patriotism. If such a feeling is ever to exist, not just among an "educated minority" but among the millions of an old and tried continent, it will not be the product of a hasty penstroke, but of a long historical evolution.



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# THE SCREEN

## I'M GLAD YOU ASKED THAT

NOW THAT the campaign speeches and voting are well over, the movie reviewer can do a little campaigning and voting on his own by selecting his Best Ten. This selection at year's end, in which the reveiwer can be as personal and arbitrary as he likes, hopefully serves good purposes. It may inspire those film makers whose pictures are missing from the list to do better next year. (This is doubtful since some of the movies on the list are by no means the money makers.) It may help the readers of a column to know their reviewer and thus appreciate the position he is likely to take in forthcoming columns. (This is unlikely since every moviegoer considers himself a movie critic.) And finally, this reviewer makes the list because he thinks it's fun to do. So without further discussion and without naming them in the order of preference, these are the ten I liked best for 1960.

*The Sundowners*—because of Jack Hildyard's stunning photography of Australia and Fred Zinnemann's first-rate direction of an outstanding cast in a story of a family's devotion to each other.

*The Virgin Spring*—because of Ingmar Bergman's fine use of cinema in telling a medieval legend that seems to be a simple tale of violence and rebirth but actually is as rich as an awesome tapestry.

*Inherit the Wind*—for Stanley Kramer's daring in relating this story of two men's fight over freedom of expression, and for the excellent performances by Spencer Tracy and Fredric March as the protagonists.

*General Della Rovere*—because of the universality of Rossellini's stirring film about the transformation of a mean criminal into a noble hero and the outstanding performance of De Sica in this convincing portrait.

*I'm All Right, Jack*—because the Boulting brothers' hilarious satire about a row between Capital and Labor has a witty plague-on-both-your-houses tone that makes it the funniest comedy of the year.

*Sunrise at Campobello*—because of its moving theme of victory over crippling illness, Dore Schary's good production in this movie version of his stage play, and the excellent portraits of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt in the twenties by Ralph Bellamy and Greer Garson.

*World of Apu*—because, although this third part of director-writer Satyajit Ray's trilogy has less of the poetic quality of its predecessors, it tells very effectively a fascinating and universal story of a young man's happiness as a husband, despair as a widower, and rebirth as a father who claims his son.

*Pollyanna*—for Walt Disney's amazing success, helped by his staff and a fine cast led by Hayley Mills, in revamping and visualizing Eleanor H. Porter's sappy story about the glad girl into a delightful movie that won both adults and young fry.

*Spartacus*—because it is the best of the year's films done on an epic scale, and because young director Stanley Kubrick ought to be given some kind of special palm for his skillful handling of such a wide variety of actors as Laurence Olivier, Charles Laughton, Kirk Douglas, Peter Ustinov, Jean Simmons, and others in this elaborate spectacle about the slaves' revolt.

*When Comedy Was King*—because, although this semi-documentary film has a banal narration that talks down to its audience, its visuals consist of a series of film clips as well as one and two-reel comedies from the silent days; and the clowning of such comedians as Chaplin, Keaton, Langdon, Turpin, the Keystone Cops, and many other funny men who were masters of the sight gag makes us realize what we are missing today and could still have in spite of our verbose talkies.

So stands the list. I limit myself to ten because one has to stop somewhere. But the line-up could easily stretch to twenty with the addition of other titles about which there is something good to be said: *Masters of the Congo Jungle, The Angry Silence, Hiroshima, Mon Amour, Ikiru* (sometimes known as *To live), Sons and Lovers, Our Man in Havana,* and more. That was 1960. Let's raise a glass to 1961 and hope the Hollywood movie makers mean it in the coming year when they say—as they will—that movies are better than ever.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

# OF NOTE

## MAN'S NEED FOR SYMBOLS

IN THE DECEMBER issue of the *Catholic World* (180 Varick Street, New York 14, N.Y. $6 a year), Father Andrew M. Greeley, author of *The Church and the Suburbs,* writes of modern man's need for symbolism and ritual. The following is a substantial excerpt from Father Greeley's article.

Throughout most of human history man lived in a world of symbol and ritual—a good part of it connected with the agricultural processes on which he depended for his existence. Agricultural man saw everything he did in intimate connection with the spiritual forces which were at the basis of all reality. He regarded his eating, his cultivation of crops, his sex life, his growing old and dying not as mere physiological processes but as events which represented and were explained by a higher spiritual reality (normally involving various gods and goddesses and called a "myth"). For him the body



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and the spirit were not isolated as they are for his modern descendants. Quite the contrary, they were united by symbol and ritual in an organic unity. He had ceremonies to mark birth, puberty, maturity, marriage, sickness and death. All fitted into the great myth or mystery which gave meaning and order to his whole existence.

Youth was a time of learning the meaning of the ritual processes which would enable him to play the role of a full-fledged adult in his community. Old age was a time when he would have a position of honor and importance in the tribe because of his profound experience in and understanding of the mystery on which the ritual life of his community was based. Virtually every event which could affect his life had a symbolic explanation which kept him in close touch with his family, his friends, the world of nature and the mysterious forces which guided the destiny of the universe.

Needless to say, the worst kind of superstitions and immoralities often corrupted these symbolic systems. Nevertheless, the idea that there is a close union between matter and spirit and that there is some sort of divine plan operating in the life cycles is much closer to Christianity than our present attempts to ignore the inner rhythms of life.

Indeed the Christian sacramental system is a ritual which is really an elevation and perfection of all the old myths. A follower of Christ who has immersed himself in the psychology and theology of the sacraments understands as no one else the marvelous unity between matter and spirit—a unity which achieved its perfection when the Word of God took on human flesh, founded a Church which is an extension of His Incarnation and ordained that seven physical signs—symbols—would be the channels for the distribution of His saving Life.

Basic and elemental material things—water, bread, oil, wine, the marriage union—were not merely involved in a constantly recurring divine plan. They had become the sacred tools a God-Man uses to enable humans to co-operate in and further the plan. No longer were mysteries merely re-enacted each year in an unending and eternal cycle. Now man can use material things to bring a single historic divine redemptive scheme to a victorious conclusion.

And what of modern man with practically no important symbolism and rituals to order his life? Professor Everett C. Hughes . . . gives the perfect description of him: "How ghastly can be the smile of a suffering man who is pretending that all is well; how pathetic is the stiff but tottering stance of a man who, because he does not know how to share his trouble with others through the historic liturgies, is about to break under them. How pathetic, also, the man who, in his time of trouble, expresses the ultimate of that individualism in which we have all been reared—the insistence that his troubles are so private and so unique that no social salve can smooth them."

In our day we have tamed the material processes and made them our servants—temporarily at least. But just as a conquering people loses effective communication with its subjects and does not understand them, so we have lost effective communication with the world of nature. Instead of living in rational harmony with the material universe of which we are irrevocably a part we treat the world around us as we would paper plates which are discarded as soon as they have helped us satisfy our passing desires. Unfortunately when we lose reverence for the material world we ultimately lose reverence for ourselves. We can forget the elemental life processes in which we are immersed only at great peril to our sanity and our happiness.

Perhaps Professor Hughes in describing the situation also gives the answer when he uses the word "liturgy." Symbolism is a form of worship; ritual is the only way a being that is part spirit and part animal can order his life to the service of the Divinity. In the absence of this order, no other order is possible. If man is not related to God then he cannot be related to nature or to his fellow men; but on the other hand only by using natural signs and physical symbols to relate to nature and his fellow man can he relate to God. All symbols then are some sort of liturgy; and all liturgy—even the supreme liturgy of the Mass—must be symbolic.

The implication of the importance of symbolism in the rearing of a family are profound. In days gone by young people had definite patterns to follow and transition ceremonies (called by anthropologists "rites of passage") to mark the change from one pattern of life to another. These patterns and ceremonies are practically non-existent today (except for the normally meaningless graduation ceremonies) and it is going to be many a long year before society discovers some new ones. . . .

One cannot expect a child to look on Confirmation as a "rite of passage" making him a lay missionary unless his parents who have already received the sacra-


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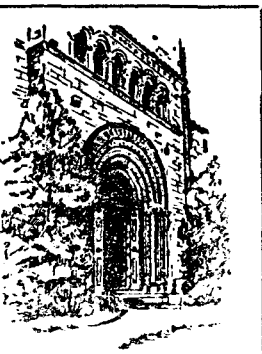

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ment think of themselves as missionaries. Nor can one be certain that the younger generation will regard the Mass as a sacrificial banquet when they see the older generation often refuse to participate in the Sacred Food which is the Communion of the Banquet. Nor will the initiation ritual of Baptism seem very important when neither mother nor father go to it and the important part of the day seems rather to be the family gathering after the Church ceremony is over. Finally if the neighborhood parish offers a program of active participation—and more and more are—it will have little effect on the children unless joining in vocally in the worship of the Mystical Body becomes a family project, including even the father.

It is not impossible for a family to begin to set up its own liturgies—with a small "l." About the only symbolic events in the life of the average family are the annual birthday parties and the exchange of gifts on Christmas and wedding anniversaries. There seems no good reason why the anniversaries of baptisms, confirmations and First Communions should not be commemorated. Celebrations could be held on the feast days of patron saints and also on the anniversaries of special events in a family's history—the occupation of a new home, for example. Prayers might be said on the days when relatives or friends have died. Some parishes have attempted to have special evenings of prayer for a grammar school graduation class to mark the fact that these youngsters have officially become teen-agers. Such rites of passage may have only limited effects, but they represent an attempt to put some order and significance into an otherwise confused and disorganized rush to maturity.

The Catholic has many advantages over his non-Catholic neighbors in the search for symbolic pegs upon which he can hang the various garments of his life. He has a huge reserve of symbols at his command in the liturgical year and the sacramental system. It may take several generations before we rediscover how to utilize these symbols to their best advantage, but we owe it to our children and our grandchildren to attempt a beginning.

# COMMUNICATIONS

## "CATHOLICS AND RACE"

Notre Dame, Ind.

TO THE EDITORS: The article by Mathew Ahmann, "Catholics and Race" (Dec. 2, 1960), reveals again how far Christians are from giving effective witness for the Church of Christ. What disturbs me most about the role of Catholics in our race problem is that I can find so little evidence that we are becoming more rather than less Christian in our attitudes and behavior toward non-whites. During the past five years I have lived in four different states in the Southwest, Midwest and East. In none of the Church parishes with which I was associated did I find any enthusiasm, nay willingness, to welcome the Negro in as fellow child of God. I became sufficiently involved in parish activities even in this short period to have contact with a wide variety of parishioners. Only in exceptional cases did I find one who was ready to accept a Negro as neighbor. Unfortunately, most of the people whom I met who are ready to accept the Negro as a person, and not to prejudge him on the basis of a long-cherished stereotype, are college professors. Unfortunately again, not all college professors or teachers are ready and willing either. I would venture to say that the small impact which college professors make generally upon the community—except for those whose impact is measured in technological terms—is nowhere better reflected than in the area of race relations.

The Negro cannot look to the Catholic population of this country for help in the immediate future. Most Catholics are first and second generation Americans, or young third generation Americans, and they are mainly concerned with the achievement of status respectability. This includes most importantly, the home in the suburbs or proper section of town. Nothing seems to appall them more than the thought that the Negro may be able to move in next door. They perceive the Negro as a great threat to their Status security, so newly won. It is the values of status security that dominate their lives, not the value embodied in the dictum to "love thy neighbor as thyself."

These people begin by explaining that Negroes don't really want to move in next door; that this idea is really the workings of some rabble rousers. "Negroes prefer to live in their own section of town," and they can always cite cases of Negroes who do. Fine, you respond, so do many Italians, Irish, Polish and others prefer to live "with their kind." Your concern is for the Negro who wants to exercise his freedom of choice, to get that same feeling of status that you just acquired by buying a home in a fashionable neighborhood. Now the focus of the conversation switches sharply. Previously, these people had seemed sympathetic to the Negro. Their tone now becomes cold and calculating. They remonstrate about property values, and about being forced to have these people shoved down their throats by court actions and questionable do-gooders. When you remind them of the myth about property values, and that studies verify that this is a myth (L. Laurenti) they deny your facts, don't believe you. Suddenly, of course, you are confronted with the key challenge: "You don't want your daughter to marry a Negro, do you?" It seems to me that this challenge must be met head on. I have tried to point out that



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in raising this question, they are strongly suggesting two things about the white population of the United States: first, that white girls are waiting breathlessly for the opportunity to be free to marry Negroes; and second, that there is something inherently inferior about the white male when compared with the Negro male. Both of these suggestions are patently false. Religion, social class, ethnic group preferences and a host of other assortative mating factors will continue to act as natural forces to keep interracial marriages to a minimum. At the same time as the Negro is integrated into white society (for what else can we call it but white society?) the factors which now bring on the fear of interracial marriage must of necessity disappear.

It would be pleasant to end this letter by saying that our hope lies in the college students of today, particularly those at Catholic colleges. But such I cannot say. In my recent teaching experiences, Michigan State Univ., and now Notre Dame, I have found only the same small minority of students whose religious principles came before their pocketbook. The majority are willing to concede that the Negro is equal, but not equal enough to move into their neighborhood.

Attitudes and beliefs are usually only slowly changed, but they can be changed, and in this area they must be changed as quickly as possible using all the sound techniques that are available to us, including particularly dynamic, daring leadership from above. Abstract statements of principles are not sufficient in this matter of race relations. Not a sense of duty but love should be moving us to action now. Are Church and civic leaders too concerned about fund drives and too enamored of the virtue of prudence to act?

WILLIAM V. D'ANTONIO.

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**BOOKS**

# "Terribly Alone in a World Without God"

BITTER HERBS. By Marga Minco. Oxford. $2.25.
NIGHT. By Elie Wiesel. Foreword by François Mauriac. Hill and Wang. $3.

By JAMES FINN

WHAT THESE two small books have in common is suggested by saying that they belong with Anne Frank's diary and with Michel del Castillo's memoir *A Child of Our Times*. For all of these are accounts of the war and its attendant, unprecedented horrors as they were experienced by these authors when they were children.

The difference between their accounts and even the best of others —the war correspondent, the combat soldier, the historian, the statesman, the journalist—is evident in the uneasiness with which one applies to them the term "author." All of those writers have, in varying degrees, a real ability, a true talent, which allowed them to present with intensity and clarity these recollections of their early days. This "literary" talent is the precondition of communicating; without it their memories, however deeply seared into their own persons, would fall too readily into place as mere, additional statistics. But one of the distinctions of these books is that they seem to lie outside the constructed work. Terrible things happened in the lives of these people when they were as yet young and unformed; these are some of the things that happened; this is how they appeared to the eye and mind of the child.

In 1940 Marga Minco was a little girl in Holland. As Jews, she and her family had more cause than others to fear the future, but her father remarked only that "It won't come to that in Holland," and they remained on. Even when the Germans came and they were given the yellow stars to sew on all their coats, her mother thought it "certainly convenient" that they were given as many as they desired for "now we can keep some in reserve for our summer clothes." Her sister Betty sewed hers on with great care, and her sister-in-law Lottie was admired when she pointed out that hers fitted exactly into one of the patterned squares of her coat. Only her brother David initially refused his because "if I can I'd like to be ordinary, for today."

But soon it was impossible for Jews to be ordinary in Holland. The worst did come. Families were dispersed and people disappeared. It became a struggle to find a door that would open, that would offer refuge from arrest and almost certain death.

"I could not help thinking about those doors when I lay in bed that night and could not get to sleep. I thought of the door which I always had to open on the Night of the Passover, to show the weary stranger that he was welcome and could sit down at the table with us. Every year I hoped that someone would come in; but no one ever did. And I thought of the question which I, as last born, had to ask, *"Manishtanno, halailo, hazay.* Why is this night unlike all other nights, and why do we eat unleavened bread and bitter herbs. . . .?"

"Then my father would chant of the exodus from Egypt, and we ate of the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs, in order that we should taste again of that exodus—from year to year, for ever and ever."

Only Marga, of all her immediate family, was able to find an open door. After the liberation she sometimes looked for the familiar face. But "they would never come back —not my father, not my mother, nor Betty, nor Dave or Lottie."

This brief chronicle, which unfolds quietly and undramatically the small daily events which partially screened the vast abyss of Nazi cruelty, has its own telling impact,



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all the greater perhaps for its dry restraint, free as it is of accusation or bitterness.

Elie Wiesel, too, tells of the small events, of the easy acceptance of the stars of David, of the apparently unshakable confidence—so bewildering to read about—that the worst would not take place. But soon he leads us to the very rim of that yawning abyss which claimed the lives of so many Jews—the aged, the healthy, the weak and the young.

Before he was yet fifteen, Elie, a strongly religious Jew, was taken from his home in Transylvania and led through the death houses of Birkenau, Auschwitz and Buchenwald. He saw his mother and sister led away never more to be seen, and saw his father degraded and crushed in the struggle to maintain life in unbearable surroundings. He saw prisoners fight to the death for scraps of bread, smelt the flesh of burning bodies, saw living children fed to the flames. And in this holocaust, confronted with the most tangible evil this cruel century has known, his faith, too, died.

"Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky.

"Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever.

"Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust. Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself. Never."

No reader could be invulnerable to such a passage, but to the believer, to the Christian, it must penetrate with special force. And so too must another passage in which Elie Wiesel tells of his subsequent reaction to the ceremony of Rosh Hashanah while he is yet imprisoned.

"I had ceased to plead. I was no longer capable of lamentation. On the contrary, I felt very strong. I was the accuser and God the accused. My eyes were open and I was alone—terribly alone in a world without God and without man. Without love or mercy. I had ceased to be anything but ashes, yet I felt myself to be stronger than the Almighty, to Whom my life had been tied for so long. I stood amid that praying congregation observing it like a stranger."

Mauriac quotes both of these passages in his foreword and his beautiful, compassionate comment suggests a response the Christian might make—although Mauriac himself did not make it when he came face to face with Elie Wiesel.

Mauriac's restraint is fully understandable. It is a mark of his own deep delicacy and understanding. For Elie Wiesel has truly named this account *Night*. He reminds us again, not of the historic events—for who, knowing them, could forget?—but of the dark depths to which the human spirit plummeted and of the spiritual suffering and sacrifice that no man can measure. But what Christian, seeing the dark passage through which this man traveled, can fail to think the night must have an end? What believer, whether he be Christian or Jew, can fail to hope that Elie Wiesel's Job-like accusation against the Almighty is only part of a dialogue that is ongoing?

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# Notes of Refreshment

**TOURIST IN AFRICA. By Evelyn Waugh. Little, Brown. $3.75.**

By MAX COSMAN

TODAY, having paid some of the ineluctable bills of time, Evelyn Waugh is naturally no longer the sort of sprig he was when the going was good. As a matter of fact, what with raising six children (one of them emulating his father as novelist), devoting himself as ever to church and class, even indulging himself in a variety of crotchets, he is a fifty-five-year-old, rather creaky, almost decrepit if we are to believe all he says.

Be that as it may, he still comes as close as anyone can to being that something we think John Bull is. Certainly, when he travels, he does so with typical John-Bullism. It makes him consult his comfort as if virtue itself were being satisfied. And, of course, when he speaks, it dictates that he please himself not his listeners.

*Tourist in Africa* is a record of another of Mr. Waugh's trips to the land named. He went by train to Genoa, embarked there, crossed the Mediterranean, went through the Suez Canal, and swung down the East Coast of the continent. After a series of stops at Kenya, Tanganyika, the Rhodesias, Mozambique, Bechuanaland, and the Union of South Africa, he took ship for home. For all his occasional grumbling he enjoyed himself, and his last sentence, almost by way of defiance to prospective critics, reads: "I have had a happy two months and I won't let the weekly papers spoil them for me."

His concern is not without grounds. If one compares his account with some by contemporaries like Arthur Koestler and Rebecca West, it is seemingly little more than what he modestly describes it to be: notes of "refreshment in the spectacle of other people at work, leading lives quite different from one's own."

*Tourist in Africa,* then, offers neither a documentation of what is happening in Africa nor even a tentative examination of a problem like *apartheid*. It treats such matters but glancingly. By the same token, however, it avoids pustulants that often accompany controversial topics. It has no racisms, no crackpot suggestions, no embattled reflections on the losses sustained by England in the territories in question. The closest it comes to bitterness is in the eminently just, well-formulated conclusion that "the foundations of Empire are often



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occasions of woe; their dismemberment, always."

What primarily we do have in the volume, and this in no vaunting sense, is Waugh himself—less prickly perhaps, but not uncharacteristic for all that. Like his smuggest fellow Englishmen he can hie himself to a game preserve, as at Voi, and report that he is "both ignorant and blasé about tropical fauna." Or having gotten out to the ruins of Zimbabwe, "the most remarkable in Africa south of Egypt" as he says, he can nevertheless rather parochially conclude that its Temple is "the Wrong Shape, something utterly alien."

Neo-feudalist that he is, he also takes his usual swipes at modernism. Some are overt like his dislike of contemporary art or his dissatisfaction with the Labor Government's groundnut fiasco at Kongwa. Others are implied in what he praises: Dr. Jameson's adoration of Rhodes, for example, or Father Groeber's work at Serima Mission.

But always, going beyond what is painfully limitary in him—he objects to bringing up children in Southern Rhodesia because its "accent" is bad—there are salty reflections to remind us that fundamentally his is a civilized mind and a sturdy point of view, both of which, it should be added, are badly needed as correctives in many of our present assumptions.

Take the one which believes that what is happening in Africa is welcome in the long run. "From Algeria to Cape Town," notes Mr. Waugh, "the whole African continent is afflicted by political activities which it is fatuous to ignore and as fatuous to dub complacently an 'awakening.'"

Or the other which claims that bureaucracy is contrived solely by Socialists. "It is one of the evidences of original sin," counters Mr. Waugh. He offers a truer indictment: "The great alluring false promise of the Socialists is that the State will wither away."

Or a third, which holds that Europeans did pacify Africa "Under European rule in the first forty years of this century," refutes Mr. Waugh, "there have been three long wars in Africa on a far larger scale than anything perpetrated by marauding spearmen, waged by white men against white, and a generation which has seen the Nazi régime in the heart of Europe had best stand silent when civilized and uncivilized notions are contrasted."

Such sensibility burgeoning freely in varied contexts does a very important thing. It turns what might otherwise be but a Baedeker for armchair tourists into a book for everyone. And in doing that it helps to create still another contribution, a very pleasant one, to the canon of its highly gifted, idiosyncratic author.

# Humor, Cleanly and American

**THE SNAKE HAS ALL THE LINES. By Jean Kerr. Doubleday. $3.50.**

By JEAN HOLZHAUER

SOCIOLOGISTS, especially those with religious persuasions, make much of the changing role of the family in today's society. They mean usually a shift from centrality and independence as a unit to decentralization in favor of extra-family, community activity at all age levels.

Jean Kerr, who is in the process of becoming one of the country's foremost humorists, would no doubt stand up and scream bloody murder at any implication that her work is sociological source material.

Well, scream away, dear Mrs. Kerr. Because it is.

It was not so very long ago, after all, that fathers referred seriously, and in print, to their sons as "manly little fellows," and mothers to their daughters as "brave little women," and writers of either sex to "children's faces, looking up,/ Holding wonder like a cup," and to "new souls with heav'n in their grasp," and worse.

Of course it is impossible to judge how seriously the reading public took this down; but there is nothing to suggest any large-scale revolt. On the other hand, Mrs. Kerr and her ilk exemplify a kind of contemporary egalitarianism that permits, indeed encourages, a cheerful, wisecracking relationship between parents and children. Contrary to the dim forebodings of some sociologists, there is little to

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indicate that such parents have lost the whip hand. Their egalitarianism is of the current and usual variety: everybody's equal, but in the family structure parents are more equal than anybody else.

No doubt Mrs. Kerr's brand of family humor represents a healthy reaction to the Victorian sentimentalisms quoted above. It may be disquieting for a mother to be questioned, as one of the Kerr boys (inspecting the bottled contents of the family refrigerator) questioned her: "Mom, were you ever Miss Rheingold?" But it is equally consoling to be able to think of a scion, instead of as a "manly little fellow," as the Big Dumb Nut that he frequently is.

Cards on the table are not always the attractive picture that Mrs. Kerr presents, to be sure. But in the later day maze of Freudianism, delinquency and other eruptions of honesty, humor persistently recurs. Among literate, articulate optimistic American families, in fact, it is carrying the day.

Above all, this type of humor is cleanly and American. It is equal, as Mrs. Kerr mentions in a chapter titled "My Wild Irish Mother," to coping with disaster on the scale of a baby shoe discovered in a fermenting keg of home-brew. It can meet head-on the wiles of beauty culture, beat the rap of *Status Seeker* theoreticians, and fend alike with advice-columns, air line ads and etiquette books.

With heavier topics, this excellent light humor rarely engages; one can imagine what Mrs. Kerr, in her modish domestic merriment, would think of *Streuwelpeter*. When she takes on *Lolita,* in a chapter called "Can This Romance Be Saved?—Lolita and Humbert Consult a Marriage Counselor," she overreaches her grasp. The result, for the reader, is some of the same embarrassment that Miss Bette Richart recently noted (in The Commonweal, December 9) in connection with the verse of Miss Phyllis McGinley.

*"The counselor gives his advice":* Mrs. Kerr writes. "At first glance it seemed as though these two people

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## VIA FRANCIS THOMPSON

The four o'clock sun slanted on the desks
a vibrant gloss, and April lavendered
and fanned my up-to-eyebrow heap of tests
awaiting medleyed A, B, C, and D's
when, from a labyrinth of babble just
outside my door, came Sheila's "S'ter, how was
my 'Hound'?" (She shared my English 1V with nod
and nap, though quite awake next bell for gym).
"What bitter pulp—red-pencilling of themes.
Did you love lute and lutanist, when young?
Earth's carrousel?"
When this teen talkathon
took breath, I said: "A normal girl, I loved
and rode the whistling manes unto the stars
until some feet, in an unhurrying chase
begged me to leave those maiden myths and come."
"You had no fear of having naught beside?"
"When with majestic instancy He clasped
my hand, repeated *come,* I rose; and caught
from Love's hid battlement the amaranth.
But when the footfalls halt beside you, I
dare guess—orange blossom scent."
Upon *The Hound of Heaven's* marginals, caressingly
lay Sheila's hand outstretched. There in the sun
her diamond shot precipitated trust.

SISTER MARY HONORA, O.S.F.



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were poles apart. To begin with, there was the vast difference in their ages. Obviously it was difficult for an experienced girl like Lolita to put up with Humbert's childishness."

Whatever M. Nabakov intended with his novel, it was nowhere near the point of such jibes.

On smaller grounds, notably her own experience as American wife, mother, and successful writer, Mrs. Kerr is more reliable. She has an immense talent for assaying whole ranges of culture implicated in such experience: for example, convent school education, which she does nicely and without rancor in a chapter called "When I Was Queen of the May." There, to the life, is

"Sister Stanislaus, who used to clear her throat three times a day before she spoke, and then say, in hushed, melancholy tones, 'A girl who would chew gum will smoke, and a girl who would smoke will drink, and a girl who would drink (pregnant pause)—well I think you know what that kind of a girl will do.' "

There, too, are the girls who crown statues of Our Lady (two or three to the single classroom) each May: ". . . such was our reputation for zeal in this matter that the girls in a neighboring public school spread the entirely false rumor that we seminarians, in our anxiety to lay laurel on every available plaster head, had inadvertently crowned the bust of Chopin in the music room."

And there is mother, Mrs. Kerr's mother, shopping for the prescribed and inevitable white dress. Mother picks out a dress white, to be sure, but adorned with red polka-dots ("In the name of God, girl, you want to get another turn out of it, don't you?") and with a "little capelet" instead of long sleeves.

To her daughter's anguished protests over the absent sleeves, Mother snaps grimly, "It won't be the first pair of elbows they've seen up there."

The *Snake Has All the Lines* is, barring a few lapses, funnier and more tightly written than Mrs. Kerr's earlier success, *Please Don't Eat the Daisies*. The humor involving her husband and children is kinder and more consistent; there are fewer stretches of mannerism and forced fun. These improvements probably indicate greater care on the part of Doubleday editors, who have in this bright young woman a major attraction; but it also indicates Mrs. Kerr's increasing self-confidence and certainty of her material.


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